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SUBJECT: CHAVEZ GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES SUPPORT FOR AHMADINEJAD

Classified By: POLITICAL COUNSELOR FRANCISCO FERNANDEZ,
FOR REASON 1.4(D)

¶1. (C) Summary: The Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (GBRV) announced its official support June 16 for the reelection of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and -- in language typical of President Chavez's worldview -- denounced an alleged campaign to discredit the elections being conducted by unnamed forces outside of his "brother country" of Iran. End Summary.

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¶2. (SBU) In a communique issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) June 16, the GBRV announced its recognition of the people and government of Iran for "the extraordinary democratic journey that they led" on election day, noting the historic levels of participation that resulted in President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's reelection. The text went on to note the GBRV's "firm rejection of the fierce and unfounded campaign of discredit that, from the exterior, has been unleashed against the institutions of the Islamic Republic of Iran, with the objective of confusing the political climate of this brother country." It also denounced the "acts of interference in the international affairs" of Tehran, called for the end of attempts to "intimidate and destabilize the Islamic Revolution," and concluded that the Iranian people "will know how to solve their internal problems."

¶3. (C) Comment: True to form, Chavez was quick to announce Venezuela's support for what he perceives as a fellow "revolutionary" leader and to denounce external meddling in Iran's internal affairs -- an issue close to his heart. Copies of the MFA's communique have received front-page attention both in opposition-oriented and state-owned media. Chavez's loyal support to states such as Cuba, Iran, and Zimbabwe is tolerated, but unpopular among most of the Venezuelan populace. End Comment.

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